



Illustration by Jeanne R. Janish,
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CAREX NEUROPHORA **ALPINE NERVED SEDGE**

Alpine Nerved Sedge is a grass-like perennial with stems 20-80 cm tall that are clustered on short to elongate rootstocks. The lowest leaves are reduced to scales. Stem leaves are flat, 3-4 mm wide, and crowded just above these scales. Leaf sheaths are pale with distinct crossribs. Flowers occur in globose spikes that are crowded into an egg shaped or oblong head at the stem tip. The narrowly lance-shaped perigynia are 3-4 mm long and tapered into an indistinct beak. A few male flowers occur at the top of each spike. Egg-shaped scales are shorter than the perigynia they subtend and are brown and papery. Each perigynium has 2 stigmas and an achene that is lens-shaped. Fruit mature in July-August.

There are many wetland sedges similar to *CAREX NEUROPHORA*; most have perigynia that are broadest near the middle while those of *C. NEUROPHORA* are broadest at the base. *C. JONESII* and *C. CUSICKII* do not have distinct crossribs on the upper leaf sheaths. *C. STIPATA* has crossribs, but the perigynia are greater than 4 mm long. A hand lens or microscope and technical key are needed for positive identification.